

CULTIVATION OF THE FACULTIES FOR THE ARTS.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In your valuable Magazine of the 22nd inst. is inserted a paper of mine from the *British Magazine*, "On the importance of a due Cultivation of the Faculties for the Arts." I am glad to see this most important subject brought forward in *THE BUILDER*; for I am sure all who are connected with building matters must consider it a most useful work. The arts are not the finishing means whereby a house or an edifice of any kind is to be completed, but the very commencement of every building work whatever, and which will be clearly seen on a perusal of my works entitled "Illustrations and Description of Kilpeck Church," and "Early Fonts of England." The arts for the last several centuries have been lowered to the common-place qualities of mere caprice and ornamented show—making them a vehicle of inconsistency, instead of practical information. In the middle ages, the arts were used for the purposes of edification, as they also were in the early ages of the Hebrews—in whose works we find the true principles of design; yet for the last several centuries we have preferred executing our own disordered imaginations. But I trust these concepts will not much longer make a stand against common sense. These are not the times for receiving flat contradictions and absurdities, and any thing short of truth will be exposed ere it commit further mischief. One of the most extraordinary anomalies in existence is the notion that certain faculties given to man ought not to be exercised, because there are instances on record wherein the faculties have been abused. But in this conclusion men presume that God created the faculties for the arts without wisely considering their end; and the heads of education have unfortunately overlooked these faculties of the human mind, for they are not to be found in their catalogue of educational matters. The legislature have only just now awoke from their slumbers on education, and have begun to think that there may be faculties for the arts, and therefore have established schools of drawing and design. I have for many years endeavoured to impress this important subject upon the public mind; and in 1838 I published an "Address to Manufacturers in particular, and the nation at large, on the subject of British Manufacture," in the hope that the manufacturing body would see the necessity of establishing schools upon true principles for promoting a due cultivation of the faculties for the arts. In order that consistent designs might henceforth be produced and connected with every kind of manufactured goods. But little effect has as yet been produced, and for this simple reason, the manufacturers are not judges of the subject. Their faculties for the arts should have a sound training; a legitimate exercise, and a right direction given to them, that they may become judges upon all matters connected with their calling. This is a simple statement enough, and which no one can deny; but are the manufacturers judges of the wares they manufacture? Let any one use their reflecting faculties when they walk through some of the principal streets, and look at those goods which have coloured designs upon them, and they will easily come to the conclusion that the manufacturers are not judges of design or harmony of colour either. For patterns of discordant and outrageous colour, as well as senseless forms, we may with safety say that no previous time has been so prolific. Indeed, I often wonder how the ladies can allow their complexions to be made to suffer so much as they do by having dresses made up of such discordant and violent colours—acting as contrasts most injuriously to the peculiar tints and complexions of the rosy flames of our fair land. A vast reform is wanted in design for manufactures, and come it must, for the present undesigning system will not be endured much longer. Nor should it; for there is no reason why we should be behind our foreign neighbours: there is nothing to hinder us from doing what they do in design, or even more, for our minds are not so artificialized as theirs. We have a much more lively and active feeling for the beauties of nature on the whole than our foreign neighbours have, and which is a most important step towards arriving at true design; but then we have neglected many essentials through our craving and endless appetite for aggrandisement: this love of gain has so engrossed our minds, that we are become such money-hunters, as to be unable to see into the merits and importance of an intellectual undertaking, unless the monied gains are made to appear the all-important feature in it. The perfecting of the intellectual character should be the chief aim of every one; and we should then see an end of the miserable absurdities called inventions of the grotesque, and all the other deplorable esques, which the human mind has been mistified into. Incongruous patch-work of half-human, added to half-horse, half-fish, half-vegetable, forms, would no longer be allowed to con-

taminate the human mind, but the works of creation in their original purity would be announced as the only true materials wherefrom designs should be formed. It is now my intention, with the assistance of Mr. Barker, to establish courses of instruction in the arts for various classes, that each may obtain the kind of information his particular calling may require, so that his perception and faculties of form, colour, and constructiveness may have a legitimate exercise and right direction given, that they may be always progressing towards true design. Seeing in the important article entitled "State of the Iron and General Mining Trade in Staffordshire" of your magazine, *THE BUILDER*, the following remarks on design: "Schools of design require them to be formed as much as quarterly meetings of iron masters to be held—the one is incomplete without the other, the theory of business, of trading intercourse, has been too far pushed in one respect; the equipoise, in the respect we speak of, requires to be maintained, and schools of design inculcating right moral principles of guidance, with high and just aims and ends, will tend as much as an enactment on money-making to rectify the evils flowing from the past. We cannot enter into detail in the compass of a chapter, but we are zealously burning to see a change for the comfort and advantage of our countrymen; and shall be more than happy to enter into any plan or purpose that may be set on foot and in a right spirit for this end." Therefrom I may easily conclude you will give this important subject that consideration for which you are so well qualified; and should these remarks and the article you published of mine, together with the enclosed prospectuses, meet with your approbation, I shall be happy to furnish you with further information upon that part of my system which applies to mechanics and artisans in every trade, some of whom have already expressed great anxiety to receive a course of instruction, in order that they may obtain the power to draw all forms, produce harmony of colour, and execute such designs as may be required of them. I have promised to come forward and convey to them all the information I possess on the above matters as soon as classes are formed. I understand they are now endeavouring to do so; and for any assistance you can give them in their undertaking, through your excellent magazine, *THE BUILDER*, I am sure they will feel greatly obliged.

I am Sir, yours faithfully.

Geo. R. Lawis.

16, Upper Norton Street;
July 25, 1843.

Regulation.

GENERAL DRAINAGE BILL; ABSTRACT AND NOTICE OF.

A BILL has been introduced by Mr. Pusey, for the purpose of facilitating "the drainage of lands, the improvement of water power, and for the embankment, warping, and irrigation of lands."

Of this bill, having the support of the government, we propose shortly to point out the leading features.

With respect to the drainage of lands or improvement by means of embankment, warping, or irrigation, any person or persons interested as owners or as occupiers in any such land may make application to a board of commissioners to be established for that purpose, requesting that a district may be declared; and this application is to set forth the means by which such improvement is to be effected, together with maps or plans shewing the lands to which such application relates, and the land or property required to be taken cut through, &c. for the purpose, as also the rivers, watercourses, &c. to be cleared, scourred, embanked, or deepened, together with various other particulars in the bill specified, and also the probable amount of expense and the extent and value of the improvement calculated upon by carrying such works into operation.

To give effect to this proposal, two things are requisite—first, that the commissioners after due inquiry, which by the bill they are directed and fully empowered to make, shall be satisfied of the expediency of the measure—and secondly, that at the least one-half of the proprietors of the land proposed to be included in such district shall expressly assent thereto, and that there shall be no express dissent by proprietors to the amount of one-fourth of such land.

When the commissioners shall approve of the plan as originally proposed or as amended, and when the requisite assent is procured to such original or altered plan, the work is to proceed.

The proposed works must be carried out under the superintendence of a board of trustees (not more than nine nor less than three), to be appointed by the proprietors; and this board is to continue the permanent guardian and manager of the work, after it shall have been completed, when all the parties interested are not agreed as to the necessity for, or the mode of executing the proposed works;

but when they are all agreed, this board may be dispensed with, and on the request of the parties interested in the land, and on the approval of the commissioners of any plan proposed by them, the work may be executed by such person or persons as shall be named by them in their memorial to the commissioners, or by such persons as the commissioners shall name, with the same powers for executing and maintaining the proposed works, as by the bill are given to the board of trustees.

Of these powers, it is enough to say, that they seem to be sufficient, and no more than sufficient, to enable the parties to carry out their object; for instance, where any weir, dam, or other work or obstruction causes occasional flooding, works may be constructed for the discharge of the surplus water; and necessary alterations to the same end may be made in any mill or factory, so that the water power of such mill or factory be not lessened thereby—or such mill or factory may be taken by paying the value and twenty per cent. in addition thereto; and they are to make all needful reservoirs and embankments, and may divert the surplus waters of rivers, &c., adjoining the reservoirs, and may make and maintain roads over lands adjoining to such reservoirs.

These and numerous other powers thus given to the trustees are to be exercised only with the sanction and under the control of the commissioners, who are to direct the amount of compensation for damage done to parties whose property is touched, subject to appeal as to such amount to a jury to be impanelled for that purpose—with a further general power of having all questions tried on a regular issue at law. We find nothing extravagant or unreasonable in the powers thus vested in the trustees or commissioners—nothing, in fact, beyond what is commonly included in private drainage acts or other acts for the execution of public works; and the details in general as to costs, the employment of purchase money, &c. &c., the question of ownership, and the mode of charging costs, seem to have been prepared with care and strict attention to the best precedents afforded by former acts, tested by experience. In so far as this bill affects large districts of land, capable of improvement by drainage, &c. it seems to be in the nature of the general inclosure act, or rather of the bill lately introduced for that purpose, namely, to render unnecessary an application to Parliament in each particular case; and it has this advantage, a general drainage bill being even more necessary than a general inclosure act, because Parliament is far less qualified to legislate in detail on a question of drainage than on one of inclosure. The innumerable difficulties that must arise in the execution of extensive drainage operations require that very extensive powers and discretion should be vested somewhere; and a general board, whose experience will be as extensive as possible, and who will act under the direct eye of the government, and who are responsible to the public, will be a far more satisfactory and efficient tribunal for this purpose than any that would be formed for a particular drainage district. Such is the effect of the bill as applicable to large districts, which, though they might bear the cost of a private bill, may yet be largely benefited by being enabled to avail themselves of the provisions of a general act, both with reference to a more efficient performance of the works to be executed, as also to the greater security thereby obtained against jobbing, and an unnecessary waste of money by parties who are virtually all but irresponsible, under the provisions of ordinary private acts; and still further with reference to the greater degree of confidence which, it is presumed, parties advancing money for the execution of such works would feel in a board of commissioners, than in any number of trustees, in whose selection they had no voice. The principal value of the bill, however, as it appears to us, is as it affects districts of limited extent, requiring drainage, embankment, warping, or irrigation, and which by reason of such limited extent and value, cannot bear the cost of a private act. In all such districts this bill affords the means whereby such land may be drained or otherwise improved. The bill authorizes A. to cut through the lands of B. under the sanction of the commissioners—adequate compensation having been made to B., &c. &c. To such lands, and this is by far the most extensive and important class, this bill seems to be particularly directed, by providing the most simple and inexpensive machinery by which to carry out the work.

The title of this bill makes mention also of "the improvement of water power," and on this head the 37th clause enacts, that for the purpose of maintaining a constant supply of water for mills, factories, or works on any river, or preventing sudden floods therein, the commissioners, with the assent of the proprietors of such mills, &c., the value of the working water-power of which shall be equal to three-fourths of the value of the working water power of the mills, &c., existing on such river, may authorize the proprietors to elect trustees for making and maintaining reservoirs or embank-